

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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R 231959Z AUG 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PARIS
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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EMBASSY ALSO FOR USOECD, USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, FR, XA

SUBJECT: GISCARD INITIATIVE FOR AID TO AFRICA

1. BRITISH EMBASSY HAS CONVEYED TO DEPARTMENT LATEST HMG
THINKING REGARDING FRENCH PROPOSAL FOR NEW JOINT DONOR
EFFORT IN AFRICA. EMBASSY'S AID SPECIALIST R.G. DEARE TOLD
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DAS VERNON JOHNSON AND OTHER AF, EUR AND EB OFFICERS
AUGUST 9 THAT LONDON NOW BELIEVES THAT ORIGINAL GISCARD IDEA
COULD BE TURNED INTO USEFUL VEHICLE FOR COORDINATING AID IF
PROPOSED INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM WERE GREATLY CHANGED.

2. DEARE CHARACTERIZED FRENCH AS SEEKING TO MAKE STRONG
POLITICAL IMPACT THROUGH INFUSION OF "FRESH MONEY" FOR

SELECTED FEW HIGHLY VISIBLE PROJECTS. HE CONTRASTED THIS WITH U.S. DESIRE TO FIND WAYS OF BETTER COORDINATING ALREADY PROGRAMMED RESOURCES. BRITISH BELIEVE THAT AN ALTERNATIVE WAY WOULD BE TO ESTABLISH A "CLEARING HOUSE" WHERE DONORS ARE ABLE TO PUT TOGETHER PARALLEL SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC PROJECTS WHILE FOCUSING ATTENTION TO THE EFFORT BEING MADE. DEARE CITED COLUMBO PLAN AND RECENTLY LAUNCHED CARIBBEAN GROUP AS EXAMPLE OF SUCCESSFUL COORDINATING FORMAT.

3. DEARE SAID THAT UK OFFICIALS WENT OVER THEIR VIEWS WITH COUNTERPARTS IN PARIS. THEY RECEIVED NO STRONG REACTION

OTHER THAN FRENCH STATEMENT THAT THE BRITISH WERE THE FIRST TO MAKE THEIR VIEWS KNOWN. BRITISH CONCLUDE THAT UNLESS OTHERS INVITED TO JUNE MEETING MAKE THEIR VIEWS KNOWN THE NEXT EXPERTS GROUP WILL MERELY REVIEW AGAIN THE DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL FROMENT-MEURICE TABLED AT THE JUNE MEETING. HE SAID BRITISH EMBASSIES IN BONN, BRUSSELS AND OTTAWA WILL BE REVIEWING STATE OF PLAY WITH LOCAL HOST GOVERNMENTS. HE ALSO ASKED FOR U.S. REACTION TO AFRICAN BANK AND FUND PRESIDENT FORDWOR'S EFFORT TO EXPAND THE CAPITAL AND MEMBERSHIP BY INVITING NON-REGIONAL MEMBERS INTO THE BANK. THE BRITISH ARE GIVING SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION TO THIS PROPOSAL OF EXPANDED MEMBERSHIP AND SAW IT AS AT LEAST ONE POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO FRENCH INITIATIVE.

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4. THE U.S. SIDE MADE CLEAR A FORMAL U.S. POSITION HAS NOT BEEN ADOPTED BUT EXPRESSED INTEREST IN BRITISH IDEAS WHICH WERE IN FACT CLOSE TO SOME OF THE POSSIBILITIES WE ARE CONSIDERING. WE HAD EXPECTED THE SUBJECT TO ARISE AT THE SUMMIT BUT SINCE IT DID NOT, OUR THINKING HAS NOT ADVANCED BEYOND THAT REFLECTED IN THE JUNE SESSION. WE HAD HOPED THAT THE NEXT EXPERTS MEETING COULD BE POSTPONED TO LATE SEPTEMBER OR BETTER YET EARLY OCTOBER. LIKE THE BRITISH, WE COULD SEE SOME MERIT IN EXPANDING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE DONOR GROUP. WE ALSO SEE MERIT IN ESTABLISHING SOME MEANS OF STRUCTURED CONSULTATION WITH THE AFRICAN RECIPIENTS. AS WE HAVE MADE CLEAR BEFORE, WE SEE LITTLE POSSIBILITY OF NEW OR INCREMENTAL FUNDING FOR THE JOINT FINANCING OF PROJECTS AND WOULD, LIKE THE BRITISH, GREATLY PREFER AN ARRANGEMENT WHICH WOULD ALLOW FOR "PARALLEL" FINANCING OF IMPORTANT AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS. AT THE JUNE MEETING WE HAD OUTLINED SOME GENERAL IDEAS ABOUT DONOR CONSULTATIONS WHICH ARE SIMILAR TO THE BRITISH "CLEARINGHOUSE" IDEA. WE HAVE NOT YET GOTTEN BACK TO THE FRENCH BUT WE ALSO SEE THE NEED FOR THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS OF THE JUNE MEETING PUTTING FORTH THEIR IDEAS AND INDICATING THE TYPE OF COORDINATION MECHANISM WHICH WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO THEM.

WE ALSO TOLD DEARE THAT WE PLANNED TO PARTICIPATE IN UP-COMING NEGOTIATIONS ON OPENING AFDB CAPITAL TO NON-REGIONAL MEMBERS. (US POSITION ON AFDB MEMBERSHIP IS CONTAINED IN STATE 213235 WHICH IS BEING REPEATED TO YOU.)

5. THE ABOVE IS FORWARDED FOR INFO AND POSSIBLE COMMENT. HOST GOVERNMENTS SHOULD NOT BE APPROACHED ON THIS ISSUE AT THE PRESENT TIME. CHRISTOPHER

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